

Fort Riley,
Building #174
174 Lowe Place
Fort Riley
Riley County
Kansas

HABS NO. KS-54-N

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. KS-54-N

FORT RILEY, BUILDING # 174

Location: 174 Lowe Place, Fort Riley, Riley County, Kansas
USGS Junction City Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 14.693660.4326565

Present Owner: U.S. Department of the Army

Present Occupant: 174-A, CW3 Sparqur and family, 174-B, CW3 Griffin and family

Present Use: Family officer's quarters

Significance: Building # 174 is of interest as representative of the quarters built for non-commissioned staff officers at Fort Riley during the first decade of the twentieth century. Two of this exact plan and materials were built at this site in 1909. Three other duplexes were constructed previously in 1903 and 1906 of the same exterior design and basic plan. These two quarters, Buildings # 174 and # 173 were, however, built of different materials. Building # 118, # 122 and # 125 were constructed of red brick with flat arched segmental brick doorways and windows while Buildings # 173 and # 174 were constructed of rock-faced ashlar limestone with smooth-faced dooways and windows. The basic structure including shape, roof, fenestration and porch arrangement was built the same. The floor plans varied only slightly (Buildings # 173 & # 174 had a front hallway and now have side wings). In 1909, plans were being made to make Fort Riley a brigade post and thus increasing the garrison. In addition, the Mounted Service School at Fort Riley had grown in the past couple years. Therefore, it became necessary to build additional quarters, such as Building # 174 as well as other types of structures, to accomodate the increasing numbers. The architectural styling of Building # 174 is a simplified version of Georgian design influences of the Colonial Revival period of the early twentieth century. In addition, the open court setting of which Building # 174 later became a part, was popular in the early twentieth century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1909. This is the date given in both the Engineer's Historical Record Book and the Real Property Cards,

Directorate of Engineering and Housing (DEH), Fort Riley, Kansas. It is also the date that W.F. Pride gives in his History of Fort Riley for the completion of Building # 174.

2. Architect: Unknown. According to an article which appeared in the Junction City Union, October 9, 1908, p. 1, regarding the upcoming construction of quarters, "The Quartermaster General called for plans, and they were drawn up by the constructing Quartermaster at Fort Riley. Plans for thirty-three sets of quarters were submitted and have recently been approved by the Q.M. General." Thus, the possibility exists that the Quartermaster at Fort Riley at that time, designed Building # 174.
3. Original and subsequent owners: U.S. Department of War, since 1947 known as the Department of the Army.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:
 - a. Builder: Building # 174 was built by the U.S. Department of War under the supervision of the constructing Quartermaster at Fort Riley.
 - b. Contractor: The contract for construction was let to C.C. Stevenson of Junction City, Kansas. The contract for plumbing went to Johnson-Roe-Paige of Omaha Nebraska and the contract for electrical wiring went to Graber Brothers of Lawrence, Kansas (Junction City Union, July 2, 1902, p. 1).
 - c. Suppliers: The limestone used in the construction of buildings at Fort Riley came from the river bluffs on the post reservation.
5. Original plans and construction: Building # 174 has had large, two story wings added to both side elevations and the original shutters (and shutter hardware) have been removed. Otherwise, it looks as it did in the circa. 1930 photograph in the Engineer's Historical Record Book, Directorate of Engineering and Housing (D.E.H.). Copies of original blue prints dated August 1909 and labeled for this building were obviously either mismarked or the building was not constructed to plan. Only 1939 floor plans were found of Building # 174 at D.E.H. Also located at D.E.H. were drawings with specifications for the facade porch, dated June 1913, suggesting that it was either added later or replaced the original porch. Also at D.E.H. are 1938 plans for the side wing additions with garage.
6. Alterations and additions: Plans for major additions to both side elevations were made for Building # 174 (and # 173) in November of 1938, under the direction of the Quartermaster at Fort Riley, W.J.

Redner. Two windows at the side elevations which would have been obscured by the additions were blocked over and the two story, matching limestone sleeping porches with garages underneath were added (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-1). The kitchen and bathroom have been modernized. Original doors in the bedrooms have been replaced and large sliding door closets added. Floor plans dated 1939 show an entry with a side hall plan. The partition wall between the hallway and the living room has been removed so that the entry is directly into the living room.

B. Historical Context:

This is one of two quarters built for non-commissioned staff officers at Fort Riley in 1909. According to an article which appeared in the Junction City Union, October 9, 1908, p. 1, an urgent request for the construction of additional officers quarters was made to the Office of the Quartermaster General in Washington, D.C. Since the intention was to make Fort Riley a brigade post, plans were called for by the Quartermaster General for thirty-three sets of quarters. In addition, a later Union article stated on January, 1909 (p. 1), that the Mounted Service School at Fort Riley had grown so much in the past two years that it was the intention to build additional quarters.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Building # 174 was one of two, or more generally one of five, built like it for non-commissioned staff officers during the first decade of the twentieth century. Building # 174 and # 173 like it, are distinguished from Buildings # 118, # 122 and # 125 of the same design and basic floor plan, by the rock-faced limestone construction and its simple yet dignified smooth-faced, single stone, limestone lintels and sills. Building # 173 and # 174 are different from the other limestone quarters in that the bond varies, with every other course being narrower. Its architectural design is like that of the Georgian influence of the Colonial Revival style of the early twentieth century. As typical of Georgian designs, Building # 174 is a two story, rectangularly shaped and symmetrically balanced structure with six over six light sash windows, shallow molded, unadorned cornice and smooth-faced stone lintels and sills. Building # 174 is, of course, a simplified version. Colonial Revival became the dominant style for domestic architecture during the first half of the twentieth century for both civilian and army post architecture before World War II. Building # 174 and # 173 were among the first Colonial Revival residences constructed at Fort Riley. Thus, they mark the movement from the previous Queen Anne designs to the predominate use of Colonial Revival architecture on post.

2. Condition of fabric: Building # 174 appears to be in sound structural condition and to have been well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Building # 174 is a two story, rectangularly shaped, duplex residence with wooden porches at the facade and rear elevations and two story wings to either side. Building # 174 is four bays wide (six bays on the first story facade) and four bays deep (originally two). The main block is approximately 37' x 27 1/2'. The side wings measure approximately 20' x 10'.
2. Foundations: The foundation is made of rock-faced ashlar limestone (rubble in the basement), ten inches thick, with every other course being narrower.
3. Walls: The walls are made of rock-faced ashlar limestone, six inches thick, with every other course being narrower. There is a smooth-face limestone watertable around the main block.
4. Structure systems and framing: The walls are load-bearing masonry. The floors and partition walls rest on wooden joists and beams.
5. Porches: Porches run the length of both the facade and rear elevations of the main block. They both have a frame floor resting on limestone block piers. The low shed roofs, with simple molded boxed cornices, are supported by seven squared columns resting on square blocks with feet, balustrade, and two pilasters, one to either side of the facade. The tops of the columns have squared moldings consisting of a fillet, ogee, a large fillet set back with a two stepped fillet beneath it. The rear porch has been enclosed with screening (see HABS photos # KS-54-N-1 & 5).
6. Chimneys: Building # 174 has two corbeled brick center chimneys with concrete caps. One is on the front slope of the roof and the other is on the rear slope behind it (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-1).
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: There are two entries to each side of the duplex, front and rear. All are to the outside ends of the main block. They have smooth-faced limestone lintels and sills. There are single light transoms over the facade entries. The facade door is wooden panel with a large, single light pane above (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-2). The rear door is also wood panel but with four lights above (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-5).

- b. Windows: The typical window is six over six sash. Like the doorways, the windows have smooth-faced limestone lintels and sills. At the side elevations are two story wings with typical windows, four bays by two bays. At the side elevations to the rear of the addition on the first story of the main block is a typical window and on the second story is a smaller, three over three vertical light sash window. In each gable end is a lunette with smooth-faced limestone segmental arch with keystone and a smooth-faced limestone sill (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-1 & 4). To the rear elevation, on the second story, are four typical bays (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-5). On the first story, there is an entry at the far end of each side with a shorter, six over six sash window to the inside of each entry.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Building # 174 has a gable roof on the main block, covered with composition shingles. The side wings and porches have very low shed roofs covered with raised seam metal.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is a returned box cornice. At the top of the cornice is a cavetto molding under which are two inverted ovolo strips, a large stepped fillet and, again, a cavetto molding with two inverted ovolo strips below it.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Building # 174-A enters into the living room. Straight ahead, along the interior wall is the main stairway. Behind the living room is the kitchen. At the north end of the rear wall is the rear entry onto the porch. Across from this is the doorway to the basement. To the northern side of the house, entered at the foot of the main stairway, is the first floor of the sleeping porch, used as a study. On the second floor is a hallway running east-west. To the north side is the second story of the sleeping porch, used as a bedroom. The bathroom is to the center, opposite the stairway. To the southern side are two bedrooms, front and back. The front bedroom has a walk-in closet. At the front, western end of the hallway is built-in storage space (in front of the walk-in closet on the plan). There is a trap door to the attic (storage space only) in the upstairs hallway. There is a full, unfinished basement under the main block with a garage under the sleeping porch addition. According to the plans, Building # 174-B is the exact reverse of this plan (inaccessible).

2. Stairways: Building # 174-A has an open, single flight main stairway with a plain square newel post, squared balusters and a round, molded banister. The top newel post is a plain rectangular post. These newel posts, handrails and balusters replaced the originals in 1962 (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-7 & 8). The current resident has put decorative stenciling at the end of the otherwise unornamented treads. The stairway to the basement is a open, single flight, plain, unornamented wooden stairway.
3. Flooring: Building # 174-A has narrow board oak flooring with a clear varnish, put down in 1962. There is linolieum tile flooring in the kitchen and ceramic tile flooring in the bathroom. The basement and first story of the sleeping porch addition have concrete floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plaster, painted white. The only ornamentation is the picture molding, approximately one foot below the ceiling in the living room (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-7).
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The doorways on the first floor of the main block have plain wide frames with cyma reversa molding along the inside (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-7). On the second floor the doorways have an outer fillet on the inside (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-8). They are probably replacements of the originals. There is no molding in the sleeping porch additions.
 - b. Windows: The window frames throughout the main block of the house are the same as the doorways on the first floor, plain wide bands with cyma reversa molding along the inside. There is no window molding in the sleeping porch additions.
6. Decorative features and trim: The baseboards throughout the main block are plain wide bands with a strip of inverted ovolo molding at the floor. There are no baseboards in the sleeping porch additions. Building # 174 has no fireplaces but, the two chimney blocks, which run along the center of the inside walls in both rooms, upstairs and down, extend about six inches outward and are approximately three feet in width. On the second story, at the front, western end of the hallway is a built-in storage unit with drawers at the bottom and cabinets above (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-8).
7. Hardware: There are plain brass door knobs with rectangular plates on the old doors.

8. Mechanical equipment:
- a. Heating: Building # 174-A has an individual steam heating system with radiators throughout the house. A number of these radiators are cast in decorative patterns.
 - b. Lighting: Building # 174 was built six years after a central electrical system was installed at Fort Riley. The system was put in by the Junction City Electric Railway, Light and Ice Company which furnished the current from its plant to a central point in the old steam heating plant at Fort Riley. It was then distributed to the various buildings and streets by underground conduits (no overhead wires). The quarters and barracks, it was proposed, would be lit with a total of 6,000 incandescent lamps (Junction City Union, May 1, 1903, p. 1).
- D. Site: Building # 174 faces west on to an open, horse shoe shaped courtyard (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-6) with a private service road running behind the houses (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-5). Buildings # 173 and # 174, side by side, were the first residences built on this court (see HABS photo # KS-54-N-3). For years they stood alone until the red brick quarters, Buildings # 221 through # 229 were added in 1930, forming the present courtyard complex (see Supplemental Material # 1).

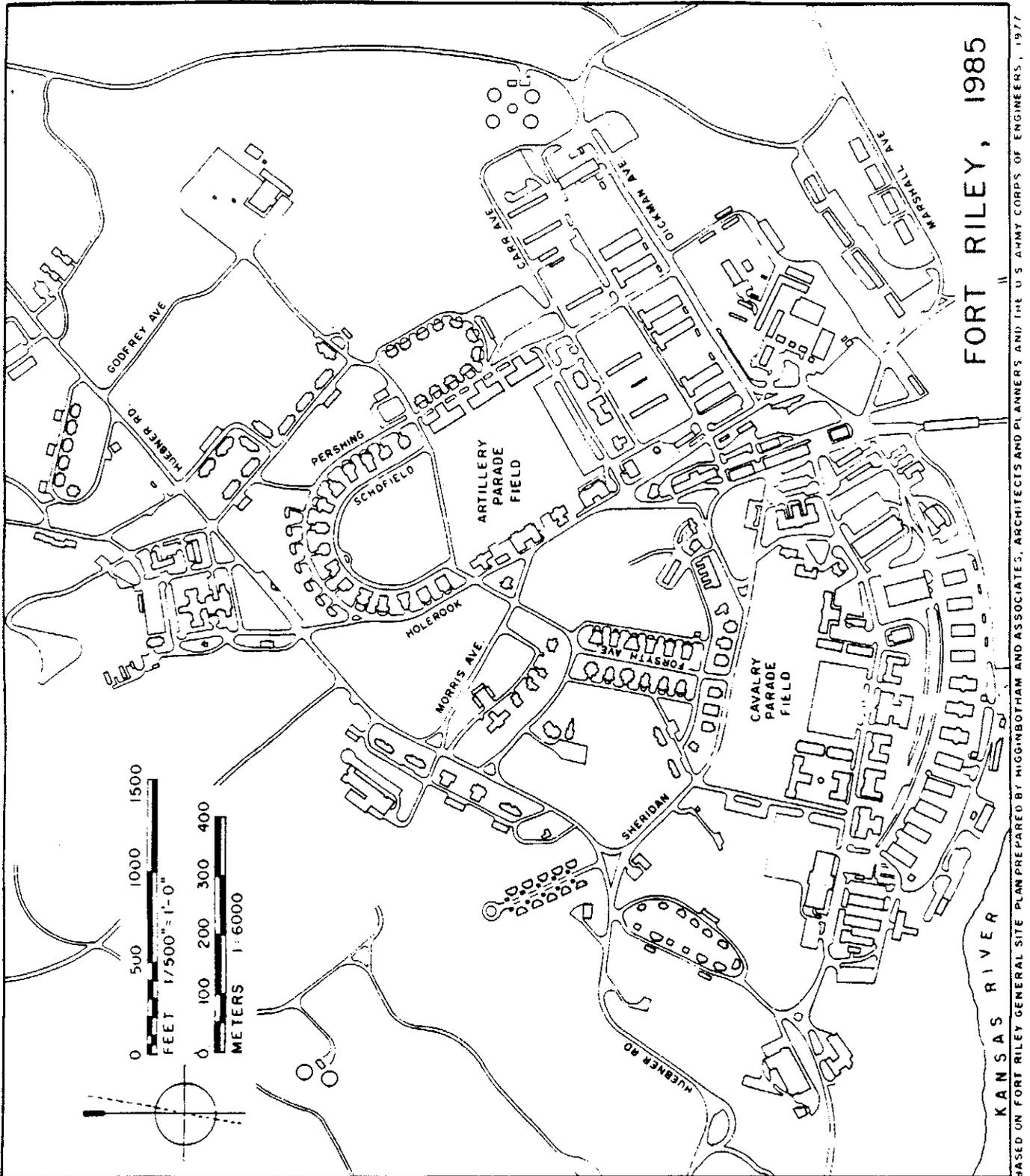
PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

- A. Architectural Drawings: See part I, section 5
- B. Early Views: There is a circa. 1930 photograph of Building # 174 in the Engineer's Historical Record Book, D.E.H.
- C. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and unpublished sources:
 - a. Engineer's Historical Record Book, D.E.H., Fort Riley, Kansas.
 - b. Real Property Cards, D.E.H., Fort Riley, Kansas.
 - 2. Secondary and published sources:
 - a. Junction City Union (various issues cited in text), Junction City Public Library.
 - b. Pride, W.F. The History of Fort Riley. 1926

Prepared by:

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Historic American Buildings Survey
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D. Supplemental Material
1. Fort Riley, 1985



BASED ON FORT RILEY GENERAL SITE PLAN PREPARED BY MCGIMBOTHAM AND ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS AND THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, 1977

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) of the National Park Service in agreement with the post commander of Fort Riley, Kansas, and the headquarters of the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Washington, D.C. The project was completed under the general supervision of Robert J. Kapsch, Chief of the HABS/HAER Division. Sally Kress Tompkins served as Program Coordinator and Robie S. Lange as Project Leader. The Field Supervisor was James A. Glass (historian, Cornell University). The project historians were Catherine Crawford (University of Maryland) and Joseph Rodriguez (University of California).